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Report Examines How Tennessee High Schools Use Credit Recovery Programs

The Comptroller's Offices of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) has released a report that highlights how high school credit recovery programs operate in Tennessee, based on a survey conducted in partnership with the State Board of Education.

Credit recovery is a strategy that permits high school students who have failed courses to recover course credits, allowing them to graduate.

Approximately 71 percent of the state's school districts with high schools responded to the survey earlier this year. Among the findings:

- Most districts with high schools provide a credit recovery option for students in the high school grades.
- Students are eligible for credit recovery after failing one or more high school courses that are required for graduation.
- Districts that reported data for the survey served more than 7,600 students in credit recovery during the 2014-15 school year. Because some districts that provide credit recovery did not supply data, the actual total number of students in credit recovery was certainly higher.
- Most districts' online credit recovery courses focus on areas of student deficiencies rather than requiring students to re-take entire courses. Some districts require all students to re-take complete courses.
- Districts have different methods for grading students in credit recovery.

Critics have raised some concerns about credit recovery programs, citing a lack of basic statistical information about states' uses of credit recovery and a lack of evaluative research about the effectiveness of credit recovery programs. Other concerns include the potential for fraudulent use of credit recovery programs to impact district graduation rates, and little teacher involvement paired with greater student autonomy in some online programs.

In Tennessee, as in most states, credit recovery programs are designed and implemented at the district and school levels, with a modicum of oversight by state education officials.

In an effort to provide more clarity around the administration of credit recovery courses, the State Board of Education is actively working to consider what additional policies or guidance may be needed concerning credit recovery.

To view the full report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/OREA/>

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